

MARTINIQUE RUINS.

Awful Visitation from Which the Island Has Suffered.

Earthquake, Hurricanes and Volcanic Eruptions of the Past—Miraculous Survival of the Statue of the Virgin.

The recent appalling disaster which has befallen Martinique, although the worst, is by no means the first terrible catastrophe which has visited the island. Indeed, the very district which was wiped out by the Mont Pelee eruption the other day has been the scene of many destructive storms, and many of the persons who perished under the rain of fire had witnessed natural disturbances which left a broad trail of death and destruction, says the New York Tribune. The hurricane of August 18, 1891, laid the greater part of St. Pierre in ruins. Not only the light wood structures, but the more massive modern houses in the new district were destroyed, and great rows of trees were uprooted or snapped off before the storm subsided.

Seven miles from St. Pierre is Morne Rouge, a residence spot which usually has a population of about 3,000. In the warm months, when persons go up from the lower lands on account of the superior climate, the population grows to more than twice its normal size. The place was densely populated and all its cottages were occupied in August, 1891, when a hurricane struck it and in a few moments wrecked the town and killed many of its inhabitants.

When the ruins were inspected it was found that the shrine of the church, with a fine statue of the Virgin, had been left intact. All about it was absolute ruin, and the inhabitants of Morne Rouge looked upon the preservation of the shrine as a miracle. When the place was rebuilt the shrine was allowed to remain where it had been left by the storm, and around it a new and imposing church was erected, to which pilgrimages are made by great numbers of persons every year on All Souls' day.

In Frederick A. Ober's "Josephine, Empress of the French," the great hurricane of 1775 is described. This began at ten p. m., August 13. The horrors of the occasion were increased by an earthquake shock at midnight. "At three a. m.," says the author, "the gale abated and the streets of St. Pierre appeared covered with ruins. The roads were blocked with trees torn up by the roots; the ruins had brought down stones of enormous size, and the shore was strewn with wrecks and dead bodies. At five a. m. a water-spout burst on Mont Pelee and overwhelmed the neighboring plains. At six it was quite calm, and the sea was smooth." After the storm it was found that 28 French and seven English vessels had been wrecked, besides 12 passenger canoes. Ninety persons perished under the ruins of their own homes, and twice that number were wounded in St. Pierre alone.

THE TULIP MANIA.

Speculation in the Bulbs in 1634 Caused the Loss of Many Dutch Fortunes.

In these sober days, when the tulip, the queen of spring flowers, is to be bought and sold as cheaply as three shillings per hundred, it may seem hard to realize that time was when a single bulb would fetch as much as £250 to £300. Yet it is too true that, in the days of old, stolid and phlegmatic Dutchmen absolutely lost their heads (and their wealth) in bulb buying and collecting, says London Amateur Gardening. It was in the year 1634 when our brother Dutchmen became mad on tulips. This craze took hold of all classes, rich and poor, learned and ignorant; though, of course, the rich were able to collect the largest and best selections, only, in due time, to find themselves ruined when bulbs once more fell to their normal onion-price value. As everybody was crazy in the eagerness to purchase tulips, the price rose enormously. Diamonds and precious stones were regarded as trash in comparison with a few good bulbs. Those were the halcyon days of the growers and bulb merchants. Many made their fortunes, though some came a cropper with the buyers, in the inevitable smash which was not long in ensuing. As much as £10,000 is accredited to having been given for a collection of 40 roots. The craze dropped as quickly as it arose, and when the fictitious prices began to drop Holland was plunged into a state of financial difficulty even worse than that which prevailed in England at the bursting of the South sea bubble, or of that in France during the revolution.

"White Wings" of London. The street sweepers of the borough of Westminster, London, have been dressed in so grotesque a uniform that Maj. Gen. Trevelyan, of the Grenadier guards, recently complained that when guardsmen go out they are frequently taken for dustmen, and their feelings are consequently hurt. The mayor of Westminster, whose official robes outshine even those of the king, has promised to add a blue band to the cape of the sweepers as a distinguishing mark. —N. Y. Sun.

Precious Bullets. Bullets made of precious stones are rarities in warfare. But during the fighting on the Kashmir frontier, when the British troops defeated the rebellious Hunzas, the natives used bullets of garnets incased in lead. The British preserved many as curiosities. —N. Y. Sun.

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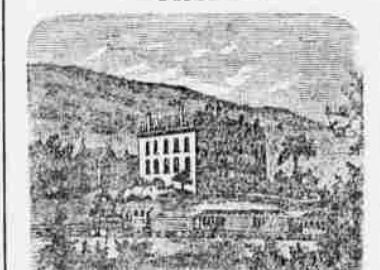
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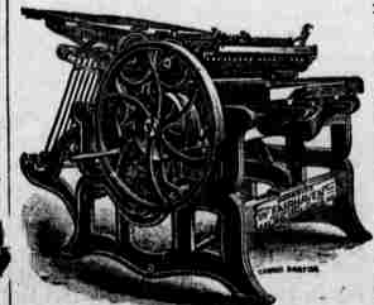
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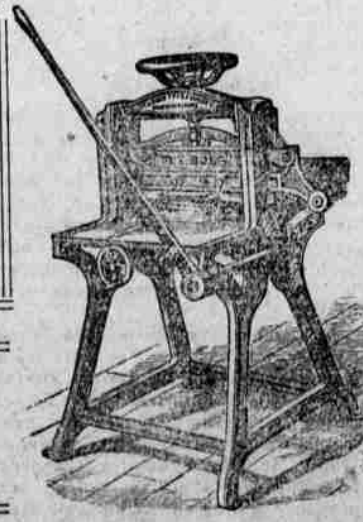
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